during 2000—2003. In addition, an amount of Rs.17.43 crores has been released for Coastal Shelterbelt Plantation during the IX Plan to various Coastal States/Union Territories, including West Bengal.

Sloth bears in the captivity of Kalandars

3207. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are about 1000 sloth bears, an endangered species, throughout the country with 148 in Uttar Pradesh alone in the captivity of Kalandars, who are using them in their shows;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to get them freed;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there is only one Bear Preservation Centre working in Agra; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to establish such Centres in other parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV):(a) There are reports of Sloth bears in possession of Kalandars across the country. However, systematic nation wide survey has not been done by the Forest Department except in Uttar Pradesh where 91 Kalandars are reported to be in possession of Sloth bears at present.

(b) The concerned Chief Wildlife Warden has been asked to stop performance of bears by Kalandars and take action for their rehabilitation at Bear Rescue Centre, Agra.

(c) Rescue and rehabilitation centres for Sloth bears have been established at Agra (Uttar Pradesh), Bannerghatta (Karnataka) and Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh).

(d) there is no proposal for establishment of Rescue Centre for rehabilitation of Sloth bears in possession of Kalandars in other parts of the country at present.

Inclusion of tea gardens as forest cover

3208. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :